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It is a commonplace to refer to the First World War as a historical watershed, but the nature of that great cataclysm's impact upon European society and culture remains a hotly debated topic. Many recent works have dealt with the Great War's role in shaping artistic and intellectual modernism and with the social history of the war. Yet the English-language literature remains dominated by a disproportionate emphasis on the western European experience.

This book seeks to redress the balance by giving equal attention to the countries of eastern and central Europe, where the consequences and repercussions of the war were arguably even more drastic than in the west. This volume also distinguishes itself by focusing specifically on cultural change during the course of the war, as distinct from the after-effects and memories of the conflict. The broad comparative scope of this work is further enhanced by its treatment of high culture and popular culture in relation to one another, and within the framework of the political and military events of 1914–18.

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